

Military Resistance 10J15



Americans Don't Support The War On Afghanistan: "60 Percent Of Respondents Favored Removing U.S. Troops From Afghanistan As Soon As Possible"

October 27 By Associated Press

A Pew Research Center poll in early October found that 60 percent of respondents favored removing U.S. troops from Afghanistan as soon as possible, with 35 percent saying they should stay until the country is stable. That's a nearly complete reversal from a September 2008 Pew Research poll that showed 33 percent wanted troops out as soon as possible and 61 percent said they should stay until the country has stabilized.

MORE:

“I Asked One Who’d Just Returned From Deployment To Afghanistan How He Felt About It” He Said “We Gotta Get Out Of There” [Outreach To New York National Guard]

From: Alan S
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: Outreach To New York National Guard 10/25/12
Date: Oct 25, 2012 7:53 PM

This morning I approached 7 National Guard troops in two NYC commuter terminals, handing out 7 Military Resistance Newsletters and 4 DVDs of Sir! No Sir!.

But the most memorable, if not unforgettable, moment came when I asked one who’d just returned from deployment to Afghanistan how he felt about it and, looking downward, he said “we gotta get out of there.”“

Let’s make that wish reality.

Bring the Troops Home. Now!

MORE:

ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you’ve carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to Military Resistance for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don’t have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so.

If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out. Reporting what went wrong and/or got screwed up is especially important, so that others may learn from you what to expect, and how to avoid similar problems if possible.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Identifying information – locations, personnel – will be omitted from the reports.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the wars.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs identifying information be published in reporting on the action.

MORE:

Military Resistance Mission Statement:

1. The mission of Military Resistance is to bring together in one organization members of the armed forces and civilians in order to give aid and comfort to members of the armed forces who are organizing to end the war of empire in Afghanistan. The long term objective is to assist in eliminating all wars of empire by eliminating all empires.

2. Military Resistance does not advocate individual disobedience to orders or desertion from the armed forces. The most effective resistance is organized by members of the armed forces working together.

However, Military Resistance respects and will assist in the defense of troops who see individual desertion or refusal of orders as the only course of action open to them for reasons of conscience.

3. Military Resistance stands for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and other occupation troops from Afghanistan.

Occupied nations have the right to independence and the right to resist Imperial invasion and occupation by force of arms.

4. Efforts to increase democratic rights in every society, organization, movement, and within the armed forces itself will receive encouragement and support.

Members of the armed forces, whether those of the United States or any other nation, have the right and duty to act against dictatorships commanding their services, and to assist civilian movements against dictatorship.

This applies whether a political dictatorship is imposed by force of arms or a political dictatorship is imposed by those in command of the resources of society using their wealth to purchase the political leadership.

5. Military Resistance uses organizational democracy.

This means control of the organization by the membership, through elected delegates to any coordinating bodies that may be formed, whether at local, regional, or national levels.

Any member may run for any job in the organization. All persons elected are subject to immediate recall, by majority vote of the membership.

Coordinating bodies report their actions, decisions and votes to the membership who elected them, and may be overruled by a majority of the membership.

6. It is not necessary for Military Resistance to be in political agreement with other organizations in order to work together towards specific common objectives.

It is productive for organizations working together on common projects to discuss differences about the best way forward for the movement.

Debate is necessary to arrive at the best course of action.

Membership Requirements:

7. It is a condition of membership that each member prioritize and participate in organized action to reach out to active duty armed forces, Reserve and/or National Guard units.

8. Military Resistance or individual members may choose to support candidates for elective office who are for immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan, but do not support a candidate opposed to immediate, unconditional withdrawal.

9. Members may not be active duty or drilling reserve commissioned officers, or employed in any capacity by any police or intelligence agency, local, state, or national.

10. I understand and am in agreement with the above statement. I pledge to defend my brothers and sisters, and the democratic rights of the citizens of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

----- (Signed)

(Date)

----- (Application taken by)

Military Resistance: Contact@militaryproject.org
Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657
888-711-2550

MORE

You Can Take Action That Makes A Difference: Join The Military Resistance Organization: MILITARY RESISTANCE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (please print): _____

Armed Forces? (Branch) _____

Veteran? Years: _____

Union: _____

Occupation: _____

Mailing address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone (Landline): _____

Phone (Cell): _____

\$ dues paid _____

(See next: Calendar year basis.)

Armed Forces Members @ Dues waived

Civilians	@	\$25
Students/Unemployed	@	\$10
Civilian/Military Prisoners	@	Dues Waived

Comments:

NOTE: Civilian applicants will be interviewed, in person if possible, or by phone.

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MORE

“People Need Not Be Helpless Before The Power Of Illegitimate Authority”

**MILITARY RESISTANCE:
Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657
Contact@militaryproject.org**

[Based on a statement by David Cortright, Vietnam Veteran and armed forces resistance organizer.]

In the final analysis the stationing of American forces abroad serves not the national interest but the class interest of the corporate and political elite.

The maintenance of a massive, interventionist-oriented military establishment is based on the need to protect multinational investment and preserve regimes friendly to American capital.

Imperialism is at the heart of the national-security system and is the force fundamentally responsible for the counterrevolutionary, repressive aims of U.S. policy.

Only if we confront this reality and challenge it throughout society and within the ranks can we restore democratic control of the military.

Of course nothing can be accomplished without citizen involvement and active political struggle.

During the Vietnam era enlisted servicemen created massive pressures for change, despite severe repression, and significantly altered the course of the war and subsequent military policy.

To sustain and strengthen this challenge we must continue to build political opposition to interventionism and support those within the armed services, including national guard and reserves, who defy the goals and program of Empire.

The central lesson of the GI movement is that people need not be helpless before the power of illegitimate authority, that by getting together and acting upon their convictions people can change society and, in effect, make their own history.

The Military Project

**Military Resistance: Contact@militaryproject.org
Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657
888-711-2550**

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**



U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Called An ‘Embodiment Of Integrity’, Soldier Killed In Afghanistan Laid To Rest In Suburban Lake Worth



Special Forces Warrant Officer Joseph L. Schiro [Gary Coronado]

Oct. 15, 2012 By Alexandra Seltzer, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

ROYAL PALM BEACH —

As a man strummed his guitar and sang the lyrics to I Will Rise, a song by Contemporary Christian artist Chris Tomlin, Diana Schiro got out of her seat and stood beside her husband's casket.

Dressed in a black dress, the mother of three raised her arms up to the ceiling.

At times she'd drop her hands and stand there.

And at other times like when the guitarist sang "The victory is won", Schiro raised her hands again.

Family and friends sat in the pews behind Schiro and the American flag-draped coffin where the body of her husband, Special Forces Warrant Officer Joseph L. Schiro, lay.

The Coral Springs native was shot and killed in Chak district, Wardak province, Afghanistan on Oct. 6 while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.

His body was flown into Palm Beach International Airport Sunday afternoon where soldiers lined the streets for his homecoming.

He was laid to rest Monday afternoon at the South Florida National Cemetery. About 25 members of the Patriot Guard Riders lined the lobby of Christ Fellowship in Royal Palm Beach for the soldier's funeral this afternoon.

Soldiers called Schiro the "embodiment of integrity," "a true military leader," and said he had a "gentle spirit" and "helpful nature."

"He lived a life full of accomplishments," one said.

He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Parachutist Badge among many other medals.

"My son died in the most honorable way imaginable. For you and I," Joseph Schiro Sr. said.

"I love you, Joseph. I'm going to miss you buddy, and we will carry on in your memory."

Diana Schiro shared many memories of her late husband including when the two first met about eight years ago at an airport in Atlanta.

She couldn't figure out if she was supposed to retrieve her luggage there or at her final destination and he was "a helpful face," she said.

Two months later the two were engaged and a year later, married.

Schiro called her husband an "amazing guy" who broke down in tears one night while the two sat in her dorm room and watched *The Passion of the Christ*.

"He said to me 'I can't believe that love,'" she said. And she realized in that moment how "amazing" he was.

Schiro told stories of how the couple traveled to Hawaii with their children for three days and how she told him she'd "rather live crazy with you than predictable without you."

She was amazed by his selflessness, she said, and his faith.

"And while I hoped to have many more years with Joe," she said, "at the same time I'm trying to take in what's in front of me."

As she turned to the side and started to walk back to her seat, it was Schiro's family and friends who got out of their seats this time.

They stood up slowly row by row and, while wiping tears that ran down their cheeks, clapped.

Schiro is survived by his wife Diana, his sons Joseph Taylor and Nathaniel Lee and daughter Caroline Grace, his sister Stephanie and his parents Holley and Joseph Schiro.

Aberdeen Soldier Killed in Afghanistan



October 9, 2012 By John Chappell, Staff Writer, The Pilot

A soldier from Moore County was one of two Special Forces warriors killed this weekend while on patrol in the Chak district of Wardak Province, Afghanistan. The Department of Defense announced their loss in a Sunday press release.

Sgt. Justin C. Marquez, 25, of Aberdeen and another soldier were shot while “on dismounted patrol” the Department of Defense said. They died from wounds received from small-arms fire on Saturday, the Army said.

Also killed was Warrant Officer Joseph L. Schiro, 27, of Coral Springs, Fla. Both Marquez and Schiro were assigned to the 1st Special Forces Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Fort Bragg.

On Monday the Marquez family went to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware where the bodies of those who die in Afghanistan, or elsewhere as a result of the war, are repatriated.

Embalming, dressing and casketing take place at Dover. According to protocol, armed forces escorts accompany bodies of the fallen from Dover to funeral homes and officers are assigned to assist the families in making necessary arrangements.

Funeral arrangements for Justin Marquez have not been announced, but Boles Funeral Home of Southern Pines will handle them for the family. Mark Marquez told WTVD news in a brief Monday afternoon telephone interview that the family wanted their son’s funeral open to the public in honor not only of their son’s service but of all who served.

The Marquez family moved to Moore County from Kinston in 1996. Terry Marquez served on the Aberdeen Town Board and once ran for county commissioner. Both parents worked in areas of human development, she as a school librarian at Elise Middle and he at Sandhills Mental Health Center and now as assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at Fayetteville State University.

Justin Marquez and twin brother Drew grew up in Aberdeen and graduated from Pinecrest High School in 2005. They attended Sandhills Community College, and originally both planned careers in education.. The twins' passion was skateboarding, and social media sites like Vimeo still post their videos of pals flying through the air. Like the parents, they embarked on lives of service. Drew Marquez became a high school science teacher, his brother a soldier.

The Army said Marquez was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This was his first deployment in support of overseas contingency operations. According to the Army he enlisted in January, 2009 and completed his initial Infantry and Airborne training in June of that year.

Marquez was then stationed at Fort Bragg where he attended Special Forces Assessment and Selection. In February 2011 he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course – the famed, grueling “Q Course” – and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (A).

In addition to the Q Course, his military education included the U.S. Army Airborne School, the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) School, and the Advanced Leaders Course. His military awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terror Medal, the Parachutist Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

**“The Taliban Take Heavy Losses
But Regenerate As Fast As They
Fall”**

“A Decisive End Seems Nowhere In Sight”

“What Began In October 2001 Under The Pentagon’s Hopeful Banner Of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ Has Hardened Into Enduring Resistance”

October 27 By Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A new chapter of the Afghanistan war is opening with a slimmed-down Western force doing more advising than fighting, a resilient Taliban showing little interest in peace talks, and Americans tempted to pull the plug on a conflict now in its 12th year.

A decisive end seems nowhere in sight.

What began in October 2001 under the Pentagon’s hopeful banner of “Operation Enduring Freedom” has hardened into enduring resistance.

The Taliban take heavy losses but regenerate as fast as they fall.

Roger Noble, an Australian brigadier general who is a deputy operations chief for the international coalition, said he sees “pockets of excellence,” but others see mediocrity and worse in the wider pool of Afghan forces.

Noble acknowledged that Afghan soldiers are sometimes disillusioned with superiors whose corruption saps morale.

American public support for the war has dropped precipitously during Obama’s term in the White House.

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder and it is the working class who fights all the battles, the working class who makes the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely sheds their blood and furnishes their corpses, and it is they who have never yet had a voice - in either declaring war or making peace. It is the ruling class that invariably does both. They alone declare war.

They are continually talking about patriotic duty. It is not their patriotic duty but your patriotic duty that they are concerned about. Their patriotic duty never takes them to the firing line or chucks them into the trenches.

-- Eugene V. Debs

Media Ignored Expert's Findings That Marijuana Can Help Prevent Lung Cancer: Now It's Med-School Material

October 24, 2012 By Fred Gardner, AlterNet [Excerpts]

You'd think it would have been very big news in the spring of 2005 when Donald Tashkin, a professor of pulmonology at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine, revealed at a conference that components of marijuana smoke, although they damage cells in respiratory tissue, somehow prevent them from becoming malignant.

But headlines announcing "Pot Doesn't Cause Cancer" did not ensue.

Tashkin has special credibility.

He was the lead investigator on studies dating back to the 1970s that identified the compounds in marijuana smoke that are toxic. It was Tashkin who published photomicrographs showing that marijuana smoke damages cells lining the upper airways. It was the Tashkin lab reporting that benzpyrene -- a component of tobacco smoke that plays a role in most lung cancers -- is especially prevalent in marijuana smoke. It was Tashkin's data documenting that marijuana smokers are more likely than non-smokers to cough, wheeze and produce sputum.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse supported Tashkin's marijuana-related research over the decades and gave him a grant to conduct a large, population-based, case-controlled study that would prove definitively that heavy, long-term marijuana use increases the risk of lung and upper-airways cancers.

What Tashkin and his colleagues found, however, disproved their hypothesis.

Tashkin's team interviewed 1,212 cancer patients from the Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance program, matched for age, gender, and neighborhood with 1,040 cancer-free controls.

Marijuana use was measured in "joint years" (number of years smoked times number of joints per day). It turned out that increased marijuana use did not result in higher rates of lung and pharyngeal cancer (whereas tobacco smokers were at greater risk the more they smoked).

Tobacco smokers who also smoked marijuana were at slightly lower risk of getting lung cancer than tobacco-only smokers.

The Tashkin scoop was still there for the taking in April 2009 when Tashkin reviewed his findings at a conference at Asilomar organized by "Patients Out of Time." Investigators from New Zealand had recently gotten widespread media attention for a study contradicting Tashkin's results.

"Heavy cannabis users may be at greater risk of chronic lung disease --including cancer- - compared to tobacco smokers," is how BBC News summed up the New Zealanders' findings. The very small size of the study --79 smokers took part, 21 of whom smoked cannabis only-- was not held against the authors. As conveyed in the corporate media, the New Zealand study represented the latest word on this important subject.

Tashkin criticized the New Zealanders' methodology in his talk at Asilomar: "There's some cognitive dissonance associated with the interpretation of their findings. I think this has to do with the belief model among the investigators and --I wish they were here to defend themselves -- the integrity of the investigators... They actually published another paper in which they mimicked the design that we used for looking at lung function."

Tashkin, who is 70ish and wears wire-rimmed spectacles, spoke from the stage of an airy redwood chapel designed by Julia Morgan: "For tobacco they found what you'd expect: a higher risk for lung cancer and a clear dose-response relationship. A 24-fold increase in the people who smoked the most..."

"What about marijuana? If they smoked a small or moderate amount there was no increased risk, in fact slightly less than one. But if they were in the upper third of the group, then their risk was six-fold... A rather surprising finding, and one has to be cautious about interpreting the results because of the very small number of cases and controls."

Tashkin said the New Zealanders employed "statistical sleight of hand." He deemed it "completely implausible that smokers of only 365 joints of marijuana have a risk for developing lung cancer similar to that of smokers of 7,000 tobacco cigarettes... Their small sample size led to vastly inflated estimates... They had said 'it's ideal to do the study in New Zealand because we have a much higher prevalence of marijuana smoking.' But 88 percent of their controls had never smoked marijuana, whereas 36% of our controls (in Los Angeles) had never smoked marijuana. Why did so few of the controls smoke marijuana? Something fishy about that!"

Those are strong words for a UCLA School of Medicine professor.

As to the highly promising implication of his own study -- that something in marijuana stops damaged cells from becoming malignant -- Tashkin noted that an anti-proliferative effect of THC has been observed in cell-culture systems and animal models of brain, breast, prostate, and lung cancer.

THC has been shown to promote known apoptosis (damaged cells die instead of reproducing) and to counter angiogenesis (the process by which blood vessels are formed -- a requirement of tumor growth).

Other antioxidants in cannabis may also be involved in countering malignancy, Tashkin said.

Much of Tashkin's talk at Asilomar was devoted to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, another condition prevalent among tobacco smokers. Chronic bronchitis and emphysema are two forms of COPD, which is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Air pollution and tobacco smoke are known culprits. Inhaled pathogens cause an inflammatory response, resulting in diminished lung function. COPD patients have increasing difficulty clearing the airways as they get older.

Tashkin and colleagues at UCLA conducted a major study in which they measured lung function of various cohorts over eight years and found that tobacco-only smokers had an accelerated rate of decline, but marijuana smokers -- even if they smoked tobacco as well -- experienced the same rate of decline as non-smokers.

"The more tobacco smoked, the greater the rate of decline," said Tashkin. "In contrast, no matter how much marijuana was smoked, the rate of decline was similar to normal." Tashkin concluded that his and other studies "do not support the concept that regular smoking of marijuana leads to COPD."

The media has never taken note of the reality that there is a spectrum of expertise among doctors who approve marijuana use by patients. They have portrayed "potdocs" as quick-buck artists practicing sub-standard medicine, ignoring the serious, research-minded clinicians who understand why compounds in the plant alleviate a wide range of symptoms.

UC San Diego psychiatrist Igor Grant, director of the Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research, recently published a paper in the Open Neurology Journal concluding "it is not accurate that cannabis has no medical value, or that information on safety is lacking, and calling for its rescheduling by the federal government."

Genocide

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance
Sent: October 25, 2009
Subject: Genocide
Written by Dennis Serdel, Military Resistance 2009

Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Genocide

**Take a bar of soap
and stick it up his anus
but it doesn't do any good
as he defecates on the
world**

So take a hand grenade
stick it up his anus
stand aside and watch
him blow up like
a suicide bomber
the people think he is
a terrorist and he is
but that is one less
of them
to kill so many people
It's time to scrub
the world
do some Elite Cleansing.
Take the tide of raging men
hang them from a rope
a cloths line
then take a broom
called a 45
cleanse both their ears
from one side to the other
it's called Elite Cleansing.
It's been done by them
many times to the poor
or unwanted people
so they can have it all
like the Palestinian
genocide in Israel today
or the genocide of Indians
in the past in the USA.
But now the new name
is Elite Cleansing
take a brush that is
a machinegun
line them up in Time's square
in front of everyone
with the cameras on
do some Elite Cleansing
leave not one standing
if they start to pray
tell them there is no god.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“Targeted Killing Is Now So Routine That The Obama Administration Has Spent Much Of The Past Year Codifying And Streamlining The Processes That Sustain It”

“The U.S. ‘Counts All Military Age Males In A Strike Zone As Combatants ... Unless There Is

Explicit Intelligence Posthumously Proving Them Innocent”” “Kill First, Then Ask Questions” “The Twilight Of The American Empire Will Be Remembered For Its Endless Kill Lists And Its Codification Of Murder”



October 24, 2012 by BEN SCHREINER, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

Of the three presidential debates, Monday’s saw the only mention of U.S. drone warfare. But after the challenger Romney quickly affirmed his support of President Obama’s drone program, stating that it is “absolutely the right thing to do,” the issue was summarily dropped by moderator Bob Schieffer.

Of course, the clear bipartisan support for the administration’s ongoing campaign of assassinations can only portend a future of expanded drone warfare and U.S. administered terror the world over—no matter the outcome of the presidential election.

Indeed, a Tuesday report in the Washington Post laid bare the Obama administration’s plans to ensure that any future administration seamlessly continues its drone program. As the Post reports, “Targeted killing is now so routine that the Obama administration has spent much of the past year codifying and streamlining the processes that sustain it.”

The process of streamlining the administration’s program of “targeted” killings has reportedly led to the creation of a “disposition matrix,” comprised of both the names of suspected terrorists and the resources expended on their targeting. This matrix, the

Post reports, “is designed to go beyond existing kill lists, mapping plans for the ‘disposition’ of suspects beyond the reach of American drones.”

Such efforts to expedite the worldwide campaign of terror have reportedly left the administration buoyant on the prospects of the program’s indefinite continuation. Officials, the Post reports, “seem confident that they have devised an approach that is so bureaucratically, legally and morally sound that future administrations will follow suit.”

“The United States’ conventional wars are winding down,” the Post thus concludes, “but the government expects to continue adding names to kill or capture lists for years.”

Sure enough, as the Post revealed in a separate report published last week, the C.I.A. has sent a formal request to the White House appealing for an additional ten drones to supplement its current fleet of over 30. If approved, the paper reported, the request would “extend the spy service’s decade-long transformation into a paramilitary force.”

Yet, as the Obama administration works to extent the reach of its aerial assassins into every last crevice of the world, its claims regarding to the drone program’s effectiveness and “targeted” nature remain in doubt.

According to a September report on U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, conducted by researchers at the N.Y.U. School of Law and Stanford University Law School, evidence that the program has made the U.S. safer is “ambiguous at best.” Moreover, despite administration claims of that there have been “no” civilian casualties, the report marshals substantial evidence to the contrary.

Assessments from U.S. officials regarding the “collateral damage” from drones, though, are heavily skewed by the administration’s definition of combatants.

Remarkably, as the New York Times piece first revealing the existence of an administration “kill list” noted, the U.S. “counts all military age males in a strike zone as combatants ... unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent.”

Kill first, we see, then ask questions.

Needless to say, all such reports ought to serve—at the very minimum—as an impetus for an independent review of the drone program. But as the Post reports: “Internal doubts about the effectiveness of the drone campaign are almost nonexistent.”

The callous absence of doubt is evidently just as prevalent amongst the elite U.S. media.

For instance, in an appearance on MSNBC’s Morning Joe Tuesday, Time columnist Joe Klein chillingly sought to justify the gravest horrors of the Obama drone program.

In a debate over drones with right-wing host Joe Scarborough, Klein went on to aver, “The bottom line, in the end, is: Whose four-year-old gets killed? What we’re doing is limiting the possibility that four-year-olds here are going to get killed by indiscriminate acts of terror.”

The very fact that rationalizing the killing of children can freely emanate from amongst “respectable” circles in Washington is indicative of the severe moral deterioration from which the Obama administration’s drone program was born.

Of course, the very fact that the defining program of Obama’s foreign policy was discussed in far greater detail on a cable talk show sponsored by Starbucks than it was in all three presidential debates is quite revealing of the decay afflicting the nation’s political system.

It’s such a rotted system, though, that perpetuates our present class of amoral and unaccountable elites who so readily wage a global campaign of terror.

The twilight of the American Empire, it thus appears, will be remembered for its endless kill lists and its codification of murder.

“How The President Justified Killing An Underage American Citizen ... Without Due Process, Without Trial”

“The President Alone Serves As Judge, Jury, And Executioner — And Does Not Believe He Is Obligated To Provide Evidence To The American People”

“Abdulrahman Was Not A Terrorist, Was Never Accused Of Fomenting Terrorism (As His Father Was), And Was Not In The Company Of His Father When He Was Killed”

“By The Time He And His Cousins Were Killed, His Father Was Already Dead”



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Upon being asked how the president justified killing an underage “American citizen ... without due process, without trial,” Gibbs responded:

“I would suggest that you should have a far more responsible father if they are truly concerned about the well being of their children. I don’t think becoming an al Qaeda jihadist terrorist is the best way to go about doing your business.”

October 25, 2012 by Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.; The New American [Excerpts]

In an article in the Atlantic, Conor Friedersdorf records the comments made by Robert Gibbs, former White House press secretary and now a senior adviser to the Obama reelection campaign, regarding the use of drones to assassinate those without a demonstrable link to terror, particularly Abdulrahman al-Awlaki.

For those unfamiliar with the story, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki was killed in October 2011, and to date the Obama administration has never informed the country of any wrongdoing by this teenager, other than being related to a man (his father) who posted anti-American videos on the Internet that allegedly influenced others to commit crimes.

As he sat enjoying a roadside picnic in Yemen with a few second cousins and their friends — most of whom the young Colorado native had never met before that day — the teenager and all his companions were killed by two Hellfire missiles fired from a Predator drone

The finger that pressed the button launching the lethal ordnance was American, and so was 16-year-old Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, the target of the strike.

Upon being asked how the president justified killing an underage “American citizen ... without due process, without trial,” Gibbs responded:

“I would suggest that you should have a far more responsible father if they are truly concerned about the well being of their children. I don’t think becoming an al Qaeda jihadist terrorist is the best way to go about doing your business.”

That is the sort of callous disregard for the value of life and the rule of law that animates the current administration.

The fact is that Abdulrahman was not a terrorist, was never accused of fomenting terrorism (as his father was), and was not in the company of his father when he was killed.

That would have been impossible because by the time he and his cousins were killed, his father was already dead.

Perhaps the younger Awlaki was accidentally killed. If that were so, why wouldn’t the administration admit it?

Gibbs’ answer indicates that the boy’s only crime was having a bad father. If that’s a crime for which you can be executed, then there are a lot of people all over the world who need to be watching their backs.

The unanswered questions are mounting: How many of those killed were innocent bystanders such as those who happened to be with Abdulrahman al-Awlaki? How many of the actual “targets,” like Abdulrahman, were themselves innocent or at least had no demonstrable ties to terrorist organizations?

This question will never be known with certainty because the president alone serves as judge, jury, and executioner — and does not believe he is obliged to provide evidence to the American people.

In fact, it would be very naïve to believe the targeted assassination of an innocent like Abdulrahman was an unfortunate miscalculation.

When the judicial and executive powers of government are consolidated and restraints on the exercise of power are cast aside, it can be expected — based both on our knowledge of history and on the nature of man — that power will be abused and no one’s rights or life will be safe from elimination by despots.

A comment from “a senior administration official” quoted in the Post article explains why the “disposition matrix” was necessary to keep America safe: “We can’t possibly kill everyone who wants to harm us,” he said.

Given the expansion of the drone program and the institutional and habitual delivery of remote control death without due process, it seems the federal government will certainly keep trying.

MORE:

The Loathsome Traitor Obama Defies The Constitution Of The United States Of America:

Amendment V to the United States Constitution

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Guantanamo:

**“Of The 166 Prisoners Still Held,
86 Of Those Were Recommended
For Release, But Are Still Held”**

**“40 Prisoners Cleared For Release
Under President Bush, Between 2004
And 2007, But Never Freed”**

“Their Continued Detention Makes A Mockery Of The Processes Established To Determine Who Should Be Released”

October 25, 2012 By Andy Worthington, Uruk Net [Excerpts]

On September 21, lawyers for the Guantánamo prisoners — and others who had been watching Guantánamo closely — were completely taken by surprise when, as part of a court case, the Justice Department released the names of 55 of the 86 prisoners cleared for release from Guantánamo in 2009 by President Obama’s Guantánamo Review Task Force.

The Task Force was made up of officials and lawyers from all the relevant government departments and from the intelligence agencies, and its final report was issued in January 2010.

Of the 166 prisoners still held, 86 of those were recommended for release, but are still held, and the list reveals, for the first time ever, 55 of those names.

Until September 21, the government had refused to publicly identify any of the prisoners cleared for release, stating that it would hinder efforts to resettle them, but — perhaps because the resettlements have ground to a halt, after 42 prisoners, who couldn’t be safely repatriated because of the risk of torture or other ill-treatment, were resettled in 17 countries, or perhaps in an effort to overcome Congressional resistance to releasing prisoners — the list was released.

What is interesting, of course, is who is on the list.

Of the 55 names, 28 are not surprising, as they were included in the exclusive report published in June this year, entitled, “Guantánamo Scandal: The 40 Prisoners Still Held But Cleared for Release At Least Five Years Ago,” in which I identified 40 prisoners cleared for release under President Bush, between 2004 and 2007, but never freed.

Those cleared under President Bush — and again by President Obama’s Task Force — are 13 Yemenis, the last five Tunisians in Guantánamo, three Algerians, a Saudi, Mohammed Tahamuttan (the last Palestinian), Umar Abdulayev (the last Tajik), the last three Uighurs (Muslims from China’s Xinjiang province), and Shaker Aamer, the last British resident in the prison.

To be strictly accurate, Shaker Aamer’s status had not been publicly confirmed before by the US government, although it was common knowledge, but all of the others had their approval for transfer out of Guantánamo confirmed in a variety of documents — in particular, in the classified military files released last year by WikiLeaks, and also in the outcomes of military review boards that were made publicly available by the Pentagon.

Of the 27 prisoners not originally cleared under President Bush, 13 are Yemenis, four are Syrians, four are Afghans, and one each are from Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates.

In a further indictment of the behavior of the Obama administration, it should be noted that nine of the 55 men on the list had their habeas corpus petitions turned down by judges — seven by District Court judges, and two by the D.C. Circuit Court (the Court of Appeals) after their habeas corpus petitions had been granted by District Court judges.

Most of those who had their petitions turned down had fallen victim to the right-wing judges of the D.C. Circuit Court, who had rewritten the rules, after 38 prisoners had their petitions granted (and the majority were released), insisting that the shoddy submissions put forward in case after case by the government should, in defiance of common sense and justice and fairness, be given the presumption of accuracy.

This was disgraceful, of course, and it was also disgraceful that, in June this year, when presented with the opportunity to do something about it, the Supreme Court chose not to.

However, in most of these cases, the principal blame lies with the Obama administration, as, although DoJ lawyers were informed of the decisions taken by the Task Force, no mechanism was put in place to ensure that cleared prisoners did not have their habeas petitions challenged by the government.

That would have made sense, but as with so much to do with Guantánamo, the reality was a mess.

For 26 of these men, the problem has been that they are Yemenis, and, disgracefully, after a Nigerian named Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, recruited in Yemen, tried and failed to blow up a plane bound for Detroit with a bomb in his underwear on Christmas Day 2009, President Obama responded to a wave of hysteria by announcing a moratorium on releasing any cleared Yemenis from Guantánamo, which was meant to be a temporary measure, but which still stands nearly three years later.

Many of the other men await new homes — the three Uighurs, the four Algerians, the Palestinian, the Tajik, and the four Syrians, and probably the Moroccan and possibly the Mauritanian — although others could be released tomorrow.

Shaker Aamer, for example, whose continued detention is an indictment of the disdain for the prisoners at the highest levels of the British and American governments, should be freed immediately, to rejoin his British wife and children in the UK, and the five remaining Tunisians should also be sent home.

They had all opposed the dictatorship of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, and had been subjected to show trials in absentia, but with Ben Ali deposed, nearly two years ago, their return also ought to be straightforward.

In addition, it ought to be possible for the four Afghans and the men from Sudan and the United Arab Emirates to be returned home.

It should hardly need adding that all of these men should be freed as soon as possible, as their continued detention makes a mockery of the processes established to determine who should be released, and who should continue to be held, as well as undermining any claims by the US government that Guantánamo is anything other than the legal black hole that it was when it was first established nearly eleven years ago.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“When Rebels Declare A Town Liberated, President Bashar Al-Assad’s Government No Longer Makes Much Effort To Retake Territory”

“Now, It Sends Overwhelming Force With One Objective — To Destroy And Level All That Is Left Behind”

“He Won Damascus But He Lost Syria”

October 18, 2012 By ANNE BARNARD and HWAIDA SAAD, New York Times [Excerpts]

The town of Maarat al-Noaman in northern Syria was just last week the scene of a major victory for the insurgents, who drove government forces from checkpoints at a crucial crossroads on a major highway, apprehended scores of soldiers, celebrated atop captured armored vehicles and declared the town “liberated.”

On Thursday, jubilation turned to horror as government airstrikes sent fountains of dust and rubble skyward and crushed several dozen people who had returned to what they thought was a new haven in a country mired in civil war, according to reporters on the scene for a Western news agency, and antigovernment fighters and activists who backed up their accounts with videos posted online.

Men stumbled over rubble, carrying single bones nearly shorn of flesh and shredded body parts barely identifiable as human.

Amid a swirling crowd of rescuers, two young men embraced and wept. A man in a baseball cap pointed out crumpled buildings that, he said, crushed women, children and elderly people sheltering there. An infant in a pink shirt lay motionless, then opened its eyes. "God is great," said a rescuer, cradling the baby in his arms.

Maarat al-Noaman's reversal of fortune highlights the dark turn that Syria's civil war has taken in recent months, as fighting intensifies and the government and insurgents remain locked in an increasingly bloody stalemate, Syrian residents and military analysts said.

When rebels declare a town liberated, President Bashar al-Assad's government no longer makes much effort to retake territory, they said.

Now, it sends overwhelming force with one objective — to destroy and level all that is left behind.

Regaining and maintaining control requires resources the government, stretched on many fronts by the 19-month conflict, cannot afford, said Emile Hokayem, a Middle East-based analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"So," he added, "they actually have no problem completely destroying it."

Gutting and abandoning towns rather than trying to govern them shifts responsibility for reconstruction and relief onto the shoulders of the underequipped rebels, breeding frustration, Mr. Hokayem said, a tactic that suggests the government has given up on winning the trust of its people.

"They're not after regaining the hearts of the population," he said. "The calculation is that what's needed is for the population to start resenting the rebels, not to start liking the Assad regime again."

That dynamic — rebel gains, army crackdowns and ensuing resentment against rebels as well as the government — has played out again and again in recent months, most recently in Aleppo, Syria's largest city. Rebels last month began what they said would be an all-out offensive there. But the result was to spread fighting into previously peaceful neighborhoods and damage the city's beloved historic center, leaving many residents as angry at the rebels for bringing the fight there as at the government for its harsh response.

In Maarat al-Noaman over the past week, rebels attempted to provide some services. They tried to distribute bread after the government shelled bakeries, activists said, a tactic used in several cities, according to a recent Human Rights Watch report. But some of those efforts appeared ad hoc and rudimentary: an antigovernment video showed boys, girls and adults lining up as men handed out bread from the trunk of a small white sedan.

Abu Ahmed, the commander of a group of fighters from the nearby village of Sinbol, said in a Skype interview on Thursday that kerosene supplies had sunk so low in the town that rebels had to form a committee to keep people from cutting down olive trees for fuel.

An even thornier problem arose that one rebel commander said had left his brigade “seriously confused”: how to manage the scores of government soldiers captured in the rebel offensive.

“We don’t know what we’re going to do with them,” the commander, who asked that his name not be used and claimed to be holding 600 prisoners, said in a Skype interview on Tuesday. Even feeding them “one loaf, tomato or potato” a day would be too expensive, he said. “We don’t have food even to feed our families.”

But if the prisoners were released, he said, they might rejoin the army or pro-government militias. He said he was beginning to wish they had died in the fighting.

Yet the battle exposed weaknesses and strengths on both sides.

While the destruction on Thursday renewed questions about the rebels’ tactic of seizing territory, their earlier victory showed their growing capability and the strain on government forces.

Rebels claimed they had been able to seize for a time all the checkpoints between Maarat al-Noaman and Khan Sheikhoun, 10 miles to the south along the north-south highway that is the main artery between Damascus and Aleppo.

Lt. Ahmad Haleeb, a rebel officer, said in an interview that he had fought with more than 150 troops and that they had killed 65 soldiers and captured seven in a fight for a checkpoint. In one government-held building, a cultural center, rebels shot video of a dozen dead, shirtless men they said had been security detainees apparently executed as troops fled.

Several units worked together, one attacking government reinforcements en route to the battle, activists and fighters said last week.

Videos described as having been made during the battle showed rebels shooting down a helicopter, using small-arms fire in coordinated squads, firing rocket-propelled grenades and heavy-caliber weapons mounted on flatbed trucks, and even appearing to commandeer an armored vehicle.

They surrounded an army base at Wadi al-Deif, near Maarat al-Noaman, where on Thursday, activists and fighters said, government soldiers were still trapped without access to supplies amid new shelling by rebels.

“At a purely tactical level that was a defeat for the regime,” Mr. Hokayem said of Maarat al-Noaman.

On Thursday, the government said it was pushing rebels out of the town. SANA, the Syrian state news agency, reported that the army was “cleaning” the area and had “killed a large number of terrorists.” It said the army had uncovered caves and tunnels storing weapons, and had destroyed heavy weapons as well as 60 bombs weighing hundreds of pounds each.

But Abu Ahmed, the commander, said that rebels still controlled one side of town and aimed to control routes to Aleppo and north to Saraqeb, Idlib and Turkey.

Maarat al-Noaman drew attention because of its strategic location, the rebels' unusually well-documented gains and the vivid photographs and reporting by Agence France-Presse journalists who were also present during the airstrike on Thursday.

The town, with a prewar population of about 120,000, was an obscure provincial enclave known mainly for the Alma Arra museum, a 16th-century former traders' inn housing a collection of Byzantine mosaics and pre-Islamic pottery — and, on the entryway floor, a mosaic portrait of Mr. Assad and his father and predecessor, Hafez al-Assad.

But Maarat al-Noaman has broader significance as an archetype of Syria's neglected midsize towns. The country's hinterland is dotted with more than 120 towns with populations of more than 20,000, and battles have ravaged many that poverty and resentment made hotbeds of rebellion.

In his effort to win over Syria's elite with new economic freedoms early in his rule, before the uprising, Mr. Assad courted Damascus at the expense of the periphery that had long been the base of his Baath Party.

"He won Damascus," said Mr. Hokayem, the strategic studies institute analyst, "but he lost Syria."



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